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Commission on the Status of Women
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Item 3 (c) (ii) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace-building

Statement submitted by the Grail, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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The Grail, an international movement of women in 18 countries on 5 continents, prepares women for community leadership through integrated learning environments appropriate for each woman, country and culture. We have had Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC since 1998.

Spirituality, human rights, peace, the environment and economic justice, especially as they affect women, are common values and themes.

In addressing the second theme of the 48th session of the Commission on the Status of Women we are advocating for specific methodologies to enable women to participate knowledgeably and effectively in TWO AREAS OF CONFLICT PREVENTION:

1--BUILDING A CULTURE OF PEACE

2--SYSTEMIC, RATHER THAN PERIPHERAL, INVOLVEMENT IN PREVENTION OF CONFLICT

1) Implementing Resolution E/CN.4/RES/1999/62 TOWARDS a CULTURE of PEACE, requires that nations invest in skills training for women, parents, teachers to:

a) recognize their own personal and culture-based attitudes toward interpersonal, ethnic, class, and community conflicts and

b) begin a process of self transformation that demonstrates non violent alternatives to children and is practiced in the resolution of both private and public displays of conflict.

2) The G8 Rome Initiative on Conflict Prevention: Strengthening the Role of Women in Conflict Prevention, Rome, 18-19 July 2001, stresses "the systemic involvement of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace building...." This " systemic involvement" requires broadening women's international perspective and political awareness particularly in the following areas:

a) their nations' policies toward acquiring small arms, larger military equipment and the proliferation of nuclear weapons and

b) the festering conflicts within their countries based on ethnic, territorial and economic injustices, aggravated by both internal and global forces. Women's education needs to take into account the impact of global dynamics on their local situation.

Women must have 'access to' and 'voice at' appropriate forums, local, national and international, to seek preventive and curative relief, material and legal, in potentially explosive situations.

Strengthening women's capacities to act through systems and in public forums can be accomplished by well-developed "popular education" at the community level as well as through academic higher education, which, though valuable and necessary, is not available to many women.

We urge that educational methodologies to implement women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution be conscientiously provided with the help of non-governmental organizations experienced in the fields of gender, peace and adult education.